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Empowerment of Women Heads of Families (PEKKA) through the Perspective of ACTORS Theory: a Case Study in Jombang Regency

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Abstract: This research discusses the empowerment of Women Heads of Households (PEKKA) in Jombang Regency. The context of the research focuses on how the empowerment program is implemented. The identified issues are the implementation of the PEKKA program in Jombang Regency and the improvement of the quality of life of Women Heads of Households. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection through interviews. The main topic of this research is the application of the ACTORS theory which includes aspects of Authority, Confidence and Competence, Trust, Opportunities, Responsibility, and Support in understanding the implementation of the PEKKA program and is also linked to output aspects that include self-respect, self-confidence, and self-resilience. The main findings of the research show the need for increased coordination, ongoing training, and periodic evaluation to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the program. This research also highlights the need to enhance aspects. This study also shows the need for improvement in the input aspects of the ACTORS theory and the necessity of effective collaboration to enhance self-respect, self-confidence, and self-resilience among female heads of households. The implications of these findings suggest increasing the capacities of PEKKA participants and enhancing collaboration mechanisms between government, private sector, and community to achieve more optimal and sustainable results in the empowerment of female heads of households.

Keyword: Women's Empowerment, ACTORS Theory

INTRODUCTION

Empowering women at the national level plays a crucial role in creating good households and addressing poverty broadly. When women are empowered, they become strong agents of change, bringing about positive transformations at the family and community levels. This empowerment is also important when women become heads of households. Data from the National Socioeconomic Survey conducted by the Central Statistics Agency in 2020

showed that there are 11.44 million families headed by women, which means that 1 in 4 households in Indonesia is led by a woman (PEKKA, 2022).



Figure 1. Percentage of Female Heads of Households in Indonesia (2012 to 2022)

Source : (Maslahah, 2023)

According to the central statistics agency (BPS) in 2022, this shows that 12.75% of heads of households are female (Statistic, 2023). This shows that being the head of the family is now not only a man's task. There are also many women who lead and support their families at this time. However, until now, women heads of families often face difficulties in finding a decent and financially stable job. Many of them experience limitations in education and skills, which limits their access to better economic opportunities (Maslahah, 2023).

Based on the data above, one of the things that makes women forced to become the head of the family is divorce. This then affects the high level of poverty in the community. Divorce causes family economic instability, especially for women who have to overcome the great difficulty of increasing family income after divorce. After divorce, women often face difficulties in finding a job that can provide enough income to meet the needs of their families. Moreover, if they have dependent children, the economic burden of the family will be even heavier. Limited education and skills are also obstacles for women in accessing better economic opportunities, making the post-divorce economic recovery process even more difficult.

One of the provinces with a high divorce rate is East Java where there were 102,065 cases in 2022. This makes East Java the province with the second highest divorce rate in Indonesia. Jombang Regency is one of the districts in East Java that contributes to the divorce rate. According to the records of the Jombang Religious Court (PA), during 2022, there were a total of 3,171 divorce cases submitted to the Jombang Regency PA (Maslahah, 2023). Meanwhile, in 2023, the number of divorces in Jombang Regency will be 2,548 cases (Rosalina, 2023). This certainly has an impact on the increase in women becoming heads of families in Jombang Regency. Therefore, women have an important role in improving the quality of life of their families. This is in line with the framework in the A.C.T.O.R.S theory put forward by (Sarahn & Steve, 1997) which sees society as an empowered subject and able to make changes. In this theory, society is given responsibility and freedom in its ideas, decisions, and actions.

In their theoretical framework, (Tabbron et al., 1997) Macaulay & Cook (1997) identified five relevant empowerment strategies to be applied in the context of Women's Empowerment of Heads of Families (PEKKA) in Jombang Regency through the perspective of ACTORS theory. The first strategy is Authority, where women heads of families are empowered to address the inequality they face, by harnessing their potential to drive change towards a better life. The second strategy is Confidence and Competence, which is to foster the confidence and ability of women heads of families in Jombang to manage their families and improve their welfare. The third strategy, Competent or confidence, refers to building the confidence of women heads of families in their own abilities, so that they are confident that they are able to bring positive change in their lives. Opportunities or opportunities are the fourth strategy, which involves giving opportunities to women heads of families to choose and develop their potential. The fifth strategy is Responsibilities, which means encouraging women heads of families to take over management and responsibility for their family welfare. Finally, Support refers to the involvement of various social networks both inside and outside the community, to support the empowerment of women heads of families in Jombang Regency. This framework is the basis of analysis in examining how PEKKA can be effectively empowered through the ACTORS approach in the local context. Here is the National PEKKA logo and also the same PEKKA logo with all the regions including Jombang Regency as well.



Figure 2. PEKKA Logo

Source: (PEKKA Official Website, 2019)

Previous studies related to empowerment with the ACTORS theoretical approach have been widely researched by academics. First, the research conducted by (Fadeli & Musyarofah, 2022) focuses on the role of PGRI East Java women in community empowerment, using the ACTORS theory analysis. The level of women's empowerment of PGRI East Java from the perspective of ACTORS is already high, and their role in community empowerment is considered good, especially judging from their involvement in community empowerment organizations or communities. Second, research by (Mubaroq & Ulfia, 2022) highlighted community empowerment during the COVID-19 pandemic in Wiroborang Village, Mayangan District, Probolinggo City. In addition, there is also research from (Tifaona et al., 2022) which researches the Elderly Community in Wonosari 3G Village (Glantung Go Green) Malang City. This uses the concept of empowerment according to the ACTORS theory from Sarah Cook and Stevey Macaulay, which successfully plan inputs and anticipate various social and economic problems, so as to provide useful outputs for the community. The results of this study show how community empowerment can lead to positive changes that have a direct impact on the social and economic aspects of the local community.

This study complements the previous study with a different focus, namely on women heads of families (PEKKA) in Jombang Regency, as the subject of actors who have their own challenges. This article provides a new contribution on the role of ACTORS theory in empowerment, especially in the context of women heads of families as an important part of community development. By bringing together new elements, the framework adopted in this

article captures ideas from previous literature and introduces the perspective that women heads of families have a crucial role in filling empowerment roles that are sometimes underappreciated by the wider community. This article opens up new avenues, showing that PEKKA has great potential in replacing roles that may not always be filled by other members of society in an effort to solve various social and economic problems in their environment.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in depth of the implementation of the Women's Empowerment Program for Heads of Families (PEKKA) in Jombang Regency. Case studies provide a space to understand the inter-stakeholder interactions, the strategies implemented, the challenges faced, and the impact of the program in a real and specific social context.

This research involves the main actors involved in the implementation of the program, namely the Jombang Regency Population Control and Family Planning, Women's Empowerment, and Child Protection Office (DP3AKB), civil society organizations such as the Jombang Women Crisis Center (WCC), and women heads of families who are beneficiaries of the program. The research locations are spread across several villages in Jombang Regency which are the focus of the implementation of the PEKKA program.

The selection of informants is carried out by purposive sampling technique, which is the deliberate determination of informants based on the consideration that they have knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the program being studied. This technique is used to obtain relevant and in-depth data. This research involved six key informants from elements of the government, supporting organizations, and the community. The research process will be carried out in 2024 with a span of several months, including the preparation stage, data collection, analysis, and report preparation. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, direct observations in the field, and documentation studies. Interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner to provide direction in the conversation while opening up space for informants to convey their experiences freely. Tools such as voice recorders and field notes are used to support data accuracy.

This study involved six informants who were selected purposively. To maintain privacy, the informant's name is disguised. Mr. NP is the Secretary of the Jombang Regency DP3AKB Office who represents the government. Mrs. NF is the Head of the PEKKA Program. The other three informants, namely Mrs. A, Mrs. DW, and Mrs. ES are members of PEKKA Jombang Regency who share their first-hand experience as women heads of families. Meanwhile, Mrs. AA is the Director of WCC Jombang, a partner institution that assists the implementation of the PEKKA program in the field.

This research will be carried out throughout 2024 in several stages, starting from preparation, data collection, analysis, to the preparation of the final report. Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews, field observations, and documentation studies, with the help of voice recorders and field notes.

Data analysis uses thematic analysis techniques, which are methods used to identify, analyze, and classify patterns or themes in qualitative data. This process involves encoding information which is then grouped into relevant main themes. These identified themes allow researchers to construct a deeper understanding of the key issues that emerge from the data, as well as describe the relationships between the various elements involved in the phenomenon being studied (Afni et al., 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The women's empowerment program for heads of households in Jombang Regency aims to improve the welfare and position of women comprehensively, covering economic,

social, and emotional dimensions. This program can certainly be implemented on its own, so there is collaboration between DP3AKB and community organizations such as WCC Jombang.

To analyze how the PEKKA program is implemented in Jombang Regency, this study uses the ACTORS theory as an analytical framework. This theory is divided into two components, namely input and output. Input aspects include Authority, Confident and Competent, Trust, Opportunities, Responsibility, and Support. Meanwhile, the output aspects consist of self-respect, self-confidence, and self-resilience, which reflect the success of the program in enhancing the capacity of women heads of households. This approach helps to understand the community empowerment that occurs in Jombang Regency using the ACTORS theory. If visualized, the following is the intended ACTORS theory:

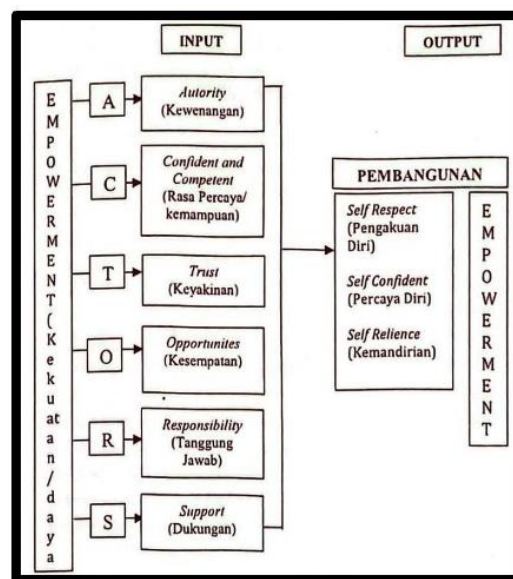


Figure 3. ACTORS Theory

Source : (Utaminingsih et al., 2020)

Input Aspects of ACTORS Theory

a. Authority Aspects

The Authority aspect refers to the power that actors have to influence the direction of policies, processes, and program outcomes. In simple terms, Authority is how to change trust and authority as well as the spirit (work ethic) into one's own (Fadeli & Musyarofah, 2022). In the context of the PEKKA Program in Jombang Regency, authority is not only manifested in the formal capacity of the government, but also in the form of the individual capacity of women heads of families to make decisions and carry out economic initiatives independently. The training and financial support provided by organizations such as WCC Jombang is instrumental in strengthening this authority.

Authority in the PEKKA Program does not stand alone, but is built through collaboration between actors and access to resources such as training, business capital, and empowerment networks such as WCC Jombang. This strengthens the capacity of women heads of families to make decisions and manage their businesses independently. As Ms. ES, a member of PEKKA, revealed: "I got a lot of training at WCC... I opened a stall also from WCC capital. I was borrowed, there was interest but little. In Sekar Arum, there are also savings and loans." This statement shows that authority in women's empowerment is not only structural (top-down), but also develops as an internal force born from experience, training, and concrete support.

However, this authority has not been fully built through equal synergy. The involvement of DP3AKB Jombang Regency is still limited in direct interaction with the community. Mrs. ES emphasized: "If I were a WCC, the Service only had a request. For (implementing) training, for me, the WCC that is not bored of every meeting must have funds." This reflects that although DP3AKB has formal authority, the implementation of the program is driven more by the initiative and sustainability of the WCC's role. In the context of empowerment, authority becomes meaningful when it is accompanied by real access to resources and the active involvement of the parties, so that women heads of families can be subjects of social and economic change, not just beneficiaries.

b. Confidence and Competence Aspects

The confidence and competence aspects in the PEKKA Program play an important role in encouraging the empowerment of women heads of households, especially those facing social and economic pressures. Through training, group discussions, and mentoring, the program encourages women to be more confident, brave to speak up, and be active in taking on roles in their social environment.

One of the PEKKA members, Mrs. A, said that at first she felt afraid and anxious when she was invited to join. However, after participating in PEKKA activities, she felt safer and more confident because she could share her story with other members. "I feel safe, I can confide in my friends at PEKKA," he said briefly.

Confidence is strengthened through a supportive environment and activities such as trauma healing, which provide a safe space to share experiences and recover. This activity also strengthens solidarity between PEKKA members.

On the other hand, the competence aspect is strengthened through skills training, such as entrepreneurship and legal advocacy. Miss DR, one of the participants of PEKKA, revealed the importance of the training and solidarity forum she attended.

WCC Jombang plays an important role by providing legal assistance, psychological assistance, and financial support, especially for victims of domestic violence. However, the lack of active involvement of local governments is still a challenge. Overall, the confidence and competence aspects in the PEKKA Program encourage women to rise up and become agents of change. The following image shows one of the trauma healing sessions at the Jombang Regency WCC Office.



Figure 3. Trauma Healing Activities at the WCC Office of Jombang Regency

Source : (Personal Document, 2024) (Maslahah, 2023)

c. Trust Aspects

The Trust aspect in the PEKKA Program plays an important role in building strong relationships between government actors, companion organizations, and PEKKA members. This trust is the foundation of collaboration that allows for open communication, active participation, and acceptance of help and support.

Trust is not only directed at external parties, but also at oneself. Women heads of families who are members of PEKKA begin to believe that they are able to rise, adapt, and be economically independent. This belief encourages them to take training, utilize business capital, and manage savings and loans collectively.

For example, support from WCC Jombang in the form of training, trauma healing, and low-interest capital loans make PEKKA members feel appreciated and cared for. Mrs. ES, one of the PEKKA members from Jombang Regency, said that she felt supported psychologically and economically through the Sekar Arum savings and loan program. This trust strengthens solidarity among members and encourages courage in entrepreneurship. Local governments through DP3AKB also help build trust by facilitating market access such as through E-Catalog, showing real support for women's economic independence. This fosters the belief of PEKKA members that their products are viable and have market opportunities. Although government involvement has not been optimal in all aspects, trust in companion organizations such as WCC remains high. WCC not only provides economic, but also social and legal support.

d. Opportunities Aspects

In the ACTORS theory, Opportunities refers to the opportunities given to actors, in this case women heads of households, to access resources that support improved welfare, economic independence, and social participation. These opportunities can be in the form of skills training, business assistance, access to capital, and space to build a wider social network. In Jombang Regency, this aspect is realized through a training program from DP3AKB which aims to equip PEKKA members with practical skills that are in accordance with market needs. Mr. NP from DP3AKB explained: "We have already had training, the last in the field of food and clothing. We bring in competent resource persons. Then legalize the business, we provide assistance until we get a permit like PIRT."

This statement shows that the government not only provides technical training, but also assists the business legalization process, so that women heads of families can develop their businesses sustainably and have competitiveness in the market.

e. Responsibilities Aspects

The responsibilities aspect in the PEKKA Program involves the role of the government, community organizations, and PEKKA members. The government, through the Jombang Regency DP3AKB Office, is responsible for providing skills training and business assistance. However, the main obstacle is the absence of regulations governing this program and the lack of budget. Mr. NP from DP3AKB stated, "Until now there is no special budget for (allocated to the program) PEKKA, and there is also no regent regulation that regulates PEKKA specifically."

In addition, community organizations such as WCC Jombang also play a role in providing policy advocacy and social protection for women heads of households. Mrs. AA from WCC Jombang said, "We are companions, our work is twofold, namely case advocacy and policy advocacy."

Members of PEKKA, like Mrs. ES, have the responsibility to seize existing opportunities, participate in training, and build mutual trust in managing savings and loan funds. "We trust each other in managing the savings and loan funds, so we can progress together," said Mrs. ES. Nevertheless, the biggest challenge remains the support of regulations and budgets, which pose obstacles in ensuring the sustainability of the program.

f. Support Aspects

The Support aspect in the empowerment of women heads of families (PEKKA) involves various forms of support provided by the government, community organizations, and internal communities. This support aims to increase the independence of women heads of families both economically and socially. In addition to financial assistance, other forms

of support include skills training, social and legal assistance, and the provision of market access for products produced by these women.

The government, through the Jombang Regency DP3AKB Office, provides skills training to help women heads of families manage their micro businesses, as well as facilitate market access such as through E-Catalog to market their products digitally. However, this support is still limited, especially in terms of budgets and policies that have not been specifically focused on the PEKKA program. This results in the sustainability of the program depending on the annual policy which can change at any time.

In addition, WCC Jombang also plays a major role in supporting women heads of families, both through social and legal assistance, and the provision of shelter for survivors of domestic violence. This shelter serves as a safe space for women facing violence, providing them with temporary protection as well as psychological assistance. The WCC also provides paralegal training to women to strengthen their understanding of legal rights and empower them to support others in their communities. This support from the WCC shows the important role of community organizations in building solidarity networks and helping women to be more independent, not only in the economy, but also in legal and social aspects.

Output Aspects of ACTORS Theory

a. Self respect

Self-respect is reflected in how PEKKA women feel valued and recognized in society. For example, through legal and advocacy training provided by WCC Jombang, women become more aware of their rights and feel valued. As conveyed by Mrs. AA, Director of WCC Jombang, "All this time we have been accompanying PEKKA women in legal and advocacy aspects, they finally know that they can help solve their own problems and this grows their courage and confidence."

b. Self confidence

Self-confidence develops through skills training and legal and social support. WCC and DP3AKB provide mentoring that increases the confidence that PEKKA mothers are able to overcome problems and take real steps to improve their lives. This support makes them believe that they can manage their businesses, overcome legal difficulties, and actively participate in economic activities. As explained by Mrs. AA as a member of PEKKA, "We help them with economic skills training, but more than that, we provide support legal and social. They are beginning to believe that they are capable of not only helping themselves, but also the surrounding environment." The self-confidence of PEKKA women began to form along with their life experiences in facing challenges and support from empowerment programs. As conveyed by Mrs. DR, even though she often feels down and has no friends, she tries to overcome the problem by seeking support from people who can listen without judgment. "Sometimes I also get down, I don't have any friends. In the village, if there is a problem, I am alone. Friends, if there is a problem, do not dare (to tell, report, or take other actions)," he said. Her experience in dealing with domestic problems makes her stronger. He even said, "I know how to handle it... When I'm stressed, I find a friend who can listen to me." In addition, Mrs. DR also tried to invite her friends to rise together, creating an environment where they motivate each other in the face of adversity.

c. Self resilience

Self-resilience is the ability of women to survive in the face of challenges, both from an economic and social perspective. The mentoring provided by WCC and DP3AKB helped them build resilience, but challenges remained, especially in terms of sustainability support. One obstacle is the lack of specific policies or budgeting from local governments, which weakens long-term support. And this for Interview with Mrs. AA as the Director of WCC Jombang Regency "Until now, there has been no regent regulation related to

PEKKA in Jombang Regency and there has been no special budgeting for PEKKA activities, this is a big obstacle in strengthening long-term support."

The absence of regulations and special budgeting highlights the need for further efforts to strengthen the PEKKA program in order to be able to have a more stable and sustainable impact on women heads of households in Jombang.

CONCLUSION

The PEKKA program in Jombang Regency has shown significant progress in several aspects of the ACTORS theory. The Authority aspect has succeeded through official support from the government and related institutions, providing the necessary legitimacy for the program. Opportunities have also been created for women heads of households through skills training and access to business capital, which have positively improved their living standards. Support from WCC Jombang and the surrounding community strengthens this achievement with material, moral, and social assistance. However, challenges remain in the aspects of Confident and Competent, Trust, and Responsibility, indicating the need for further evaluation and improvement to achieve more effective and sustainable empowerment. Additionally, the self-esteem of women heads of households has increased along with social recognition, and self-confidence still needs to be reinforced, especially in taking advantage of the existing opportunities. However, self-resilience has not yet developed due to the limitations of legitimacy overshadowing the program and a lack of consistent funding. Further support is needed to strengthen the economic and social resilience of women heads of households in Jombang Regency.

Therefore, there is a need for capacity building that includes additional training to enhance the skills and confidence of participants. Ongoing training can help PEKKA mothers face economic and social challenges. It is also important to improve collaboration. Collaboration between the government, communities, and the private sector is a key element in the implementation of the PEKKA program. The government provides vital structural support and policies, while the community, including organizations like WCC Jombang, supports the implementation and fulfillment of the needs of women heads of households. The private sector contributes through the provision of training and business capital.

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